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APPRECIATE YOUR BUSINESS

December 14, 2018

RE: Senate Bill 1145

**TO: House Committee on Tourism and Recreation
C/O Holly Hughes, Committee Chair**

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express support of Senate Bill 1145. This bill repeals the 50-year-old prohibition on commercial fishing operations from taking lake trout in trap nets on Lake Michigan and Lake Superior to rehabilitate the lake trout population.

Commercial fishing is important not only to our fishermen, but also to our local restaurants and retailers. The Muskegon Lakeshore Community has a large tourism industry with over \$313.3 million spent by visitors in Muskegon County in 2017. Tourism is one of our largest economic drivers and its impact has resulted in 4,667 direct and indirect jobs in the county.

With only 13 commercial fisheries in Michigan, and one of them, the Petersen's Fisheries, being in Muskegon County, this is an important area of interest for us. Their retail business, the Fish Monger's Wife, is a success story in our community. They began at the Muskegon Farmers Market and now have their own brick and mortar business while continuing their draw at the farmers market.

Currently, our commercial fishermen are not able to net lake trout. In addition, if those fish end up in their nets, they must throw them back regardless of if the fish are either injured or dead. The changes in Senate Bill 1145 would allow the Michigan DNR to assign lake trout on a catch-by-catch basis to commercial fishermen.

During the 1960's era, lake trout were a species that had been depleted due to over fishing and the sea lamprey. The situation has now drastically changed. The habitat for Lake Michigan fish has changed over the last 50+ years because of the change in nutrients and new species in the water. These changes, plus the restocking of lake trout, have resulted in an increase in population.

As we advocate on behalf of our members, we urge you to schedule a Committee Hearing for Senate Bill 1145. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. We appreciate your time and effort in this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cindy Larsen", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cindy Larsen
President
Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce

